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EMS IN MARION COUNTY TO UNIFY IN KEY COMPONENT OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

Top Priorities for Merged Entity are to Continue High Quality Emergency Care and Drive Efficiencies; New EMS Chief will Report to Director of Public Safety

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today announced his plan to unify Marion County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) currently provided by the Indianapolis Fire Department (IFD) and Wishard Health Services under a new EMS division that will report to the Department of Public Safety beginning Jan. 1, 2011.

The City of Indianapolis will partner with Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County (HHC) to provide EMS services. Wishard Memorial Hospital will serve as the sponsoring hospital. Through its strong and longstanding relationship with HHC, the Indiana University School of Medicine will provide medical leadership for the new division in the areas of quality, education, training and research.

Mayor Ballard directed the Department of Public Safety to study the overlapping EMS services of IFD and Wishard Health Services and determine opportunities to enhance quality and efficiencies. The first element in the unification plan involves the merger of EMS services provided by IFD and Wishard Health Services.

“Many health industry experts and community leaders have long advocated for EMS reform and consolidation of EMS services throughout Marion County, and today Indianapolis is taking a major step in that direction,” said Mayor Ballard. “Creating efficiencies like this is something we all recognize as a key component of good government. We will improve the quality of key services and reduce costs at the same time.”

Mayor Ballard and the Department of Public Safety are actively seeking input from the community, including leaders from Marion County hospitals, to prepare for a 2011 implementation.

“EMS services are a core piece of our community’s public safety strategy,” said City of Indianapolis Public Safety Director Frank Straub, Ph.D. “Mayor Ballard’s initiative to streamline fire- and hospital-based EMS into one service to work in close partnership with the other divisions of Public Safety will help deliver an even higher quality of patient care for our residents, standardize training to our EMTs, and reduce costs.”

Marion County neighborhoods affected by this unification are the areas currently served by the IFD (Warren and Washington townships) and Wishard EMS (inside the historic city limits, Franklin Township and the Town of Speedway).

“As a proponent of government efficiency and effectiveness, I praise the Mayor and county officials for streamlining our area EMS services,” said State Sen. Jim Merritt (R-Indianapolis). “Not only is this good government, but it will help local officials live within property tax revenues that are far more affordable to taxpayers. I will continue to work at the state level to provide local governments more opportunities to streamline operations and reduce fiscal burdens on hard working Hoosiers.”

An EMS chief with equal stature with the Indianapolis fire and police chiefs will report to the director of Public Safety. The EMS chief will be a physician within the IU School of Medicine’s Department of Emergency Medicine. HHC will encumber the operational costs, liabilities and all organizational responsibilities for the unified service. A medical advisory committee representing area hospitals will remain in place for clinical oversight.

For more information or to provide input on the plan, visit www.indy.gov.

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